

capacities needed that training in diplomacy which a few years' experience would probably have supplied. The English lords, vexed at the importunity of the upstart, and failing to see the importance of the crisis, sent away the ambassadors without any definite answer.

When Parliament met in autumn, the Chancellor declared the kingdom to be in great danger of conquest by its enemies, and demanded money for two expeditions, which would secure our shores from attack. One of them, the relief of the good towns of Flanders, was certainly calculated to raise the prestige of England and to secure the Channel against the enemy's fleets. But the proposed invasion of the Spanish Peninsula would merely throw away men in a distant country in the vain hope of gratifying the ambition of John of Gaunt. Parliament would have done well to reject the latter proposal and vote a large sum of money for the Flemish war. But the Duke of Lancaster's influence was still strong; he pressed hard to be put in command of a Peninsular army, and even offered to repay the nation for its outfit when he had conquered Castile. Finally, the Commons settled to do nothing. They voted a tenth and fifteenth for the defence of the kingdom, and left it to the King's Council to decide how it was to be spent. They signified their own preference that the Flemish towns should receive instant aid, but they did not make it a condition of supply.¹ In the end, neither campaign was undertaken that winter. Parliament was dissolved, and a month later the Flemish Republic perished on the field of Eosbec.

While these tardy palaverings were going on at Westminster, Philip lay before Oudenarde in hourly expectation of the arrival of troops from England. * I am surprised,' he said, ' how they can so long delay, when they know they have free entrance into this country.' At last the English herald came, bringing a scheme of future alliance, but no troops. ' The succours will come too late,' cried Artevelde bitterly, and rode off in moody silence to Ghent to call out the *lev&e en masse*. He had decided to give the French battle, for they were reducing place after place. There was a French faction ¹ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 133-4. X36-7, and 140.